

THE NEW SCHOOL  
FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH  
66 W TWELFTH ST NEW YORK

August 18,  
1941

TBK  
JMP

Dear Mr. Appleget:

I am enclosing a copy of  
the letter which I received from  
Marc Bloch. This, I think, is a  
clear case of cancellation, and I  
am therefore writing him accordingly.

Sincerely,

Alvin Johnson

Alvin Johnson,  
Director.

blh

Mr. Thomas B. Appleget,  
The Rockefeller Foundation,  
49 West 49th Street,  
New York City.

COPY

200  
Rygie Detolano  
Block, M

Fougeres, commune Bourg d'Hen  
par Bonnet (Creuse)

le 31 juillet 41  
SEP 25 1941

Dear Professor Johnson,

After your cable of July the 30th and my too short answer, I feel I must explain my situation as fully as possible. I had already written about it to Mr. Makinsky, in Lisbon. But I do not know if the letter was ever forwarded to you.

Since last April, a law from the present French government prevents every Frenchman, between the ages of 18 and 40, from leaving the metropolitan territory. Two of my sons fall within those limits. Of course, there are exceptions. But they are, in fact, very seldom granted. Etienne Montoux, who, I think, is now on his way to New York, will tell you that in spite of his having in hands a special mission order from the French Ministry of Public Education, the permission was given to him only after many difficulties. My sons, who are mere undergraduates, are much too young to be able to apply, with any chance of success, for such an order. In fact, it is now absolutely certain that should we decide to leave, it would be, necessarily, without our two eldest sons.

They, themselves, offered to remain here. They said they did not want to be the cause of any inconvenience to their brothers and sisters. But we do not think, my wife and I, that we have any right to accept their proposal. They are still only boys (18 and hardly 20). They are just old enough to be in danger of suffering more than younger children from the situation people in our case are to face, yet young enough to be still in need of some help.

Such is the reason which, at present, makes our departure practically impossible. Until last April, it would have been very easy to obtain the French visas. But the Consulate in Lyon - and, still less, the Consulate in Marseille - could not give the American visas. (Moreover the health of my mother, whom we lost during the Eastern vacations, prevented us from running the risk of leaving her alone for some weeks, in the Martinique). Now, I do not know what might be done about the American visas; but - at least for my boys - it is too late to get the French ones.

Thus, for the present. What are we to expect from the future?

Nobody may foresee whether the present legislation, as to the leaving of the French territory, will last or no: at least, with the same strictness. It will depend on the circumstances, interior and exterior.

The fate of those people who, like us, are falling under the so-called racial laws is equally uncertain. I personally have been kept in office. I can not teach in Paris. But I am commissioned to teach, next year, in Montpellier. (I myself wished to leave Clermont, the climate of which did not agree with my wife's health).

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Of course, things may change at every moment. I do not know, at present, whether my sons will be able to get on with their studies; and, as you are aware, they are excluded from many professions. There may be some exceptions, for people, who, like us, are from French descent, since many generations. But nobody knows how many will be granted. Our means of living will probably be curtailed. In what measure? It is now quite impossible to say. There are, certainly, many dangers ahead.

This is meant for the immediate future. As for the more remote one, it would not do, I think, to speak too much about it. All I can say is that the people on whose opinion it is possible to rely are full of hope and courage. Such are also my humbler neighbours here in the country. As to the peculiar situation of people in my case (which is not at all, I pray you to believe, the only one, nor, even, the foremost of my cares), there are now, I think good reasons to hope that, after some painful years - how many, who can say? we shall return to more normal and fairer conditions.

If I was alone, I should say: I do not wish to leave my country, as long as I can make myself, in some way, useful to it. As I have children, I must, above all, think of them. So that I say to you, quite decidedly, on the contrary: should the French legislation become more pliant, should it become possible for my sons to go to America with us (and I repeat that such a change is, by no means, unthinkable), should it be still possible at this moment, to cross the Atlantic, I should then immediately apply to you for the necessary visas. Such is the reason why I am enclosing in this letter the data you asked for in your cable. You will see yourself whether it is possible and advisable to secure already the visas for us, in order to have them ready in case of need, ~~for~~, if on the contrary, the data are only to be made use of when the need arises.

Now, it will perhaps seem to you I am thinking too much of myself, and not enough of the New School, that, also, I express rather badly my gratitude. I belong to those unfortunate people of whom it may be said that the more strongly they feel, the more prone they are to understatement. And in this matter, I feel, I can assure you, very strongly indeed. But one thing I may say, I do not know whether the circumstances will allow me or not to avail myself of the kindness our American friends showed to us, in our present painful predicament. But my sincerest hope is, when the general health is reestablished, to be able to cross the Atlantic in order to give to some of your people, in the Universities of the United States, the best proofs I may imagine of my thankfulness and my devotion to them.

Yours sincerely,  
(signed)  
Marc Bloch

My address will be here until the 25th September,  
afterwards, 5 rue Sainte-Croix, Montpellier, Herault.